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THE EGYPTIAN EXPEDITION

1918-1920

NOTE

WITH the present report on the work of the Museum's Egyptian Expedition, the record of its activities, the publication of which had been delayed by the vicissitudes of the war, is once more brought up to date. The end of the war in November, 1918, found the work of the Expedition centered on its concession at Thebes under the direction of Ambrose Lansing, who had maintained the excavations single-handed during the two later years of the war, and who carried through during that winter of 1918-19 the program in the Asasif described in a recent report.¹ In that report he referred to another piece of work carried out during the same season in an outlying portion of the concession—in the cliffs to the south of the two temples of Deir el Bahri—and his description of that part of the season's work is now given in Part I of the present report.

With the autumn of 1919 various members of the Expedition released from duties in the allied armies were able to return to Egypt, and during the ensuing season of 1919-20 the work at Thebes was resumed on a pre-war basis, under the direction of Herbert E. Winlock. His account of the highly successful results of that work is given in Part II of the present report.

The winter of 1919-20 also saw the resumption of that branch of the Expedition's work at Thebes conducted by Norman de Garis Davies under the Robb de Peyster Tytus Memorial Fund. Mr. Davies, who had been engaged in ambulance work in the Balkans in 1918, was able to return to Thebes in the autumn of 1919 to take up again his investigations upon Theban

tombs, and some of the results of his study of them for eventual publication in the Tytus memorial volumes are embodied in Part III of this report.

With the present season of 1920-21, which is now just beginning, the Expedition has been able still further to return to its programs in force before the war, in that during the present winter it will again carry out parallel pieces of excavation on its two original concessions—at Lisht and at Thebes.

At Lisht, excavations are being resumed in full force under the direction of Arthur C. Mace, on the Pyramid of Amenemhat I, and it is hoped that the present season will see the last side of that structure which remains to be exposed—its western one—successfully cleared of the great mass of debris under which it lies buried. Associated with him in this work are Lindsley F. Hall and Albert B. Nixon.

At Thebes, the excavation of XI dynasty tombs is being continued, under the direction of Mr. Winlock, in the area upon which the very productive excavations of last season were conducted, and associated with him in the work are Walter Hauser and H. G. Evelyn White. During a part of the season also, Mr. White will undertake a study of the architectural and decorative features of the Monasteries of the Wadi Natrun, in preparation for the publication of the history of those monasteries upon which he has been engaged.¹

The work of the Tytus Memorial Fund is likewise being continued during the present season at Thebes. Mr. Davies is engaged in the copying and recording of further representative painted tombs at Kurneh for publication in future volumes to be

¹Part II of the Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum for July, 1920, pp. 11-24.

¹See Part II of the Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum for July, 1920, pp. 34-39.

issued under that fund. Assisting him are Mrs. Davies and Charles K. Wilkinson. Under the same fund also, Henry Burton is engaged in making a photographic record of the wall-scenes both in the private tombs of Kurneh and also in the royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings.

With the effort to restore the Expedition's activities to a normal basis following the end of the war, the problem of meeting the steadily increasing expenditures necessitated by rising costs on every side immediately became a serious one. In Egypt, as elsewhere, prices both of labor and of commodities had practically doubled. The wages of our skilled native workmen, which in some grades, for example, stood at 5 to 6 piasters a day in 1914, in the same grades had risen to 10 piasters in 1919. Foodstuffs and the cost of running the camps, which had averaged very closely £9 per month for each member of the Expedition in pre-war years, proved to average £21 per month for each member in 1919 at Thebes. Transportation to and from Egypt, railway-fares in Egypt itself, freight and insurance charges on shipments, and the cost of equipment and supplies of every kind necessary for the work—in hardly any case were less than double the

former rate and in some cases approached three times their former cost by the time such material was landed on the site.

Lest such conditions should necessitate a reduction in the scope of the Expedition's work, the Trustees of the Museum found it possible to meet a part of this increased expenditure through an additional appropriation, but a very considerable sum necessary in addition to ensure the work of the season of 1919-20 was generously contributed by Edward S. Harkness at a critical point in the progress of the season's excavations, with the result that the work could then be pushed on to the fortunate discovery in the Tomb of Mehenkwetre described by Mr. Winlock in his accompanying report. Mr. Harkness has again made the same generous contribution towards the excavations of the present winter, supplementing the appropriation made by the Trustees.

An increase of the same character in the cost of publication of the Robb de Peyster Tytus memorial volumes has been met by an offer made by Mrs. Edward J. Tytus, who established the memorial to her son, of meeting the present increase in the cost of those publications, and two volumes are now in the press. A. M. LYTHGOE.

I. EXCAVATIONS AT THEBES

1918-19

IN the Supplement to the BULLETIN of July, 1920, a report was given of the field work of the Egyptian Expedition at Thebes during the season of 1918-19. Mention was made there of a separate piece of work undertaken during that time, but more appropriately considered in connection with the past season's activities, which are the main subject of the present Supplement.

In no country, probably, is the plundering of ancient tombs so common an occupation as in Egypt; and Thebes, for the modern Egyptian as for his ancestors, is the happiest hunting ground for him who makes that his trade. The west bank, for twenty-five hundred years before the time of Christ the necropolis

of one of the greatest cities in the world, had and still to some extent retains, buried in its desert plain and rock-strewn valleys, the wealth of many dynasties. In ancient times the plunderer sought gold. During the past hundred years the antiquarian value of the meanest scarab he may find makes his furtive search worth the labor of days.

During the disturbances which marked the fall of the XVIII dynasty, but chiefly during the period of dwindling power of the successors of Ramses III, the robbers of the Theban necropolis became bolder and the military guards who had the royal tombs in charge more slack and dishonest, with the result that one by one, most often with the collusion of their keepers,